

Cutting Area for 2010 Tabby Mountain WMA Pinyon / Juniper Removal Project

Thanks for your interest in the Pinyon / Juniper Removal Project. Dedicated Hunters have already saved the Division thousands of dollars on the cuttings done in the Rabbit Gulch/Tabby Mountain area. Designed to enhance deer and elk winter range, this project removes young pinyon and juniper trees (P/J) that are encroaching into preferred foraging areas.

This year we will continue cutting trees on the Trail Hollow area and also take some small trees in Santaquin Draw, a nearby sagebrush flat. As in 2009, biologists have asked Dedicated Hunters to target the P/J less than 8-10 inches in diameter from a ridge in the Trail Hollow area. In the new site, Santaquin Draw, take all P/J including all of the small trees and seedlings. Maps and driving instructions are attached.

Why Do We Remove Pinyon/Juniper

The Tabbby Mountain foothills are a critical wintering area for elk, deer, sagegrouse and other wildlife. Over the years, there has been a considerable amount of habitat work done to enhance this area for wildlife. This project joins numerous chainings, lop and scatter (tree cutting) and reseeding projects designed to promote shrub, forbs and grass growth to improve watershed conditions and to provide winter forage for deer and elk.

P/J trees are rapidly invading the old chained areas and areas with sagebrush and other plants critical to winter survival. As the trees grow larger and more abundant, they consume more water and nutrients making them unavailable for shrubs and understory plants such as grasses and forbs. Within another 30 to 50 years, this valuable winter range will become a mature P/J forest, which will contain little or no understory vegetation. In short: little forage = few mule deer, elk or anything else.

To protect the forage on these winter ranges, we have a few options: burning, chemical treatment, chaining and physical (tree-by-tree) removal. Prescribed burns and chemicals kill trees but also kill the shrubs so we lose forage values. Chaining protects more shrubs but gives only marginal results in an area invaded by small trees. The younger trees are flexible and bend under the chain, thus only a few older trees would actually be uprooted. In addition, chemical, chaining and fire treatments can be politically sensitive and are expensive.

With tight budgets, physical removal seems to be the best option currently available. Dedicated hunters and other volunteers played a major role in the rehabilitation of the Rabbit Gulch chaining. Not only have they removed thousands of pinyon and juniper trees, the money saved by not chaining or paying a contractor to do the work has allowed the Division to take on new projects. Several of these are within a few miles of Rabbit Gulch on both sides of Highway 208 where the DWR has chained or cut old sagebrush and P/J.

Trail Hollow began a new phase in the enhancement efforts. This continues with the addition of Santaquin Draw.

Trail Hollow (Two Bar) project:



The 2010 removal area is the same as last year. The area, marked in red, is most easily accessed from the north side (see map). Park along the road and walk to the trees to avoid ripping up the winter range we are trying to enhance.

Driving instructions:

To reach the site, follow Highway 40 to Highway 208 [also called the Golden Stairs Road or the Tabiona cut-off. Turn north on 208 and drive roughly 6.5 miles. The cutting area is a narrow forested ridge, which the road (208) crosses in a left curve. Access the cutting area on the north side through a

UDWR gate. This gate, on the west side of the road, is easily recognizable as it is the only UDWR roadside gate in this area with a cattle guard. If coming down from the north, the gate is roughly 3.5 miles from the turnoff. ~ GPS: N 40° 17.679, W: 110° 41.714

Santaquin Draw

This new site is a sagebrush flat being invaded by small trees. The cutting area is marked in red. Like the other site, park along the road and walk in to avoid ripping up the winter range we are trying to enhance.

Driving Instructions:

To get to the site, turn north on 208, go 3 miles and go through the UDWR gate to the left or west side. The cutting area is the sagebrush flat between the dirt road (northern edge) and the tree-lined ridge. If you are coming from the north, the road is about 7 miles from the turnoff. ~ GPS: N: 40° 14.936, W: 110° 42.689



Rules, Regulations and Helpful Hints:

Suggestions:

- 1) Map - the USGS Duchesne 1:100,000 map is useful to reach the site and shows the entire area.
- 2) Vehicles are restricted to the main existing roads. Please park along the road itself, do not drive off or follow the small two tracks. This area is a critical winter range and the fewer roads the better. Do not take 4-wheelers or other off-road vehicles off the existing (main) roads.
- 3) Cut only the pinyon and juniper. Other trees and bushes are much scarcer and have more values for wildlife. On the Trail Hollow ridge cut every third tree under 8-10 inches. If larger trees

are in the area, target the smaller trees. In the sagebrush area of Santiquin Draw, take all the trees, including the small seedlings. A **chainsaw is recommended but not required**. An axe, Pulaski (ax/flat pick combo), handsaw, clippers or shovel may make removing the smaller trees and branches easier. Spare blades and possibly an extra saw are also recommended.

4) Cut trees within two inches of the ground and remove all limbs and pine needles below the cut. If any branches, needles or anything green is left on the stump, the tree will continue to grow and eventually one or more branches will become a main trunk.

Notes:

- Tree shears may help with cutting the remaining branches.
- It's also easier to work in pairs. One person cuts the tree while the other works as the spotter and helps to hold branches.
- Another trick is to cut the top off at knee or waist high, pull it out of the way, and then recut at ground level.
- If you do not have an axe or chainsaw, you may still participate. Often other tree cutters miss a green branch while cutting. Someone trailing along behind or scouting through areas where others have cut with a tree shear or small saw can make a valuable contribution by cutting off these branches.

5) Leave the trees where they fall, de-limb the trunk [cut off the branches] and cut the branches into three-foot sections. The trunk can remain whole. Removing the branches helps by allowing the tree to settle to the ground and it removes tripping hazards. These fallen trees and branches will also help: a) prevent erosion, b) catch moisture by trapping blowing snow and c) provide valuable microhabitats for small animals and plants.

6) Take as many safety precautions as you can while cutting such as using quality eye wear, gloves, heavy boots, etc. That includes drinking water regularly to avoid dehydration. Also, do not go solo; take along someone who can be there in case of an emergency.

7) Pack it in; pack it out. Please take your litter home and leave the area as clean or cleaner than you found it.

8) Whenever you venture outdoors, make a plan and stick to it. Tell someone where you are going, when you will return and leave maps if you can. If you have a cell phone, bring it. Increase your chances of being found by giving search and rescue crews the correct place to look.

9) There are no organized campgrounds or camping areas in this area. Our recommendation would be to stay at Starvation Reservoir, which has a State Park with a camping area, boat ramp and water. It also has some excellent walleye, bass, perch and trout fishing.

10) Take along extra water, food, gas, spare tires, etc. The cutting areas are not far from civilization and are adjacent to a main road but it is always good to go prepared for emergencies.

To Receive Dedicated Hunter Credit:

- 1) Prior to going in the field, pick up a 2010 timesheet/volunteer agreement at one of the Division offices, fill in Name and Job Description (Tabby Mountain PJ removal project) and have a Division employee sign them. (The employee's signature, on the DWR authorizing signature line, only activates the insurance policy; it does not make them the project leader. You are your own project leader.) One individual may pick up agreements for everyone who will be involved (including kids over 12), fill in names and get them signed. Timesheets are good for two weeks. Note: You may go out at your convenience and I do not need to be informed of when you go.
- 2) Please record on the timesheet as much information as you can. Include date, total hours worked, mileage for the driver and equipment used (handsaw, chainsaw, clippers, etc.) Break out drive time from on-site time and write down which is which – I will give credit for both. Plan to stay overnight rather than trying to commute. Drive time can not exceed work time and I will not give credit for driving long distances on consecutive dates. If you have a long drive, you may want to check the website for other counties to find a closer project.
- 3) Take before and after photos of the work done and send a **few** to me. These can be film or digital and either mailed or emailed. If you decide to email the photos, please convert them to small files. Email photos and information, other than time sheets, to ronstewart@utah.gov; this also helps as a backup and a way for me to contact you if I have questions. A note or a map of where you cut is useful and if you have ideas on how to make the project better, please include those also.
- 4) You may work more than the eight or 16 hours required per year and I recommend getting as many hours as you need as quickly as you can for the entire enrollment period. You never know what will keep you from doing hours next year. I can give Dedicated Hunter credit up to or even beyond the 24 or 40 hours needed during a three-year period but it cannot be applied toward a new DH enrollment nor may I credit hours worked by another individual. You must work your own.
- 5) Send the original timesheets, photos and other information back to Utah Wildlife Resources, Attn: Ron Stewart, 152 East 100 North, Vernal Utah 84078. **I need the original timesheet**, not a copy or email version. The signed, original volunteer agreement/time sheet (of the correct year) is the only way to make it official.
- 6) On some occasions, organized groups such as the Mule Deer Foundation and Boy Scout troops have lead trips to work on this project. This is welcomed and appreciated. Generally, someone is named as the "project leader" and is given extra time sheets and authority to sign.
- 7) After I receive the timesheets and photos, I will enter it in the database. It may take a couple of weeks before it gets entered depending mail services, vacations and other workload.

Note: credit will be given for the hours worked cutting down trees and drive time (within reason). Other time such as eating, fishing, camping, wildlife watching, etc. cannot be considered for credit.



Juniper – scaled leaves



Pinyon Pine – needle shaped leaves

Finally, have some fun! Take along family, friends and make a day or weekend of the event. There is good fishing and camping nearby as well as good places to watch wildlife such as Starvation Reservoir and the Uinta Mountains.

Thank you for considering this project!!